

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 11, as follows:

--Subsequently, referring to FIGS. 2 and 3b, the dielectric layer 30 ~~is~~ and the underlying cap layer 20 are etched to form a damascene opening 40 and expose the first metal layer 10 (step S23). For example, a via-first technique can be performed. First, a first photoresist mask (not shown) is formed on the second dielectric layer 36 and a first anisotropic etching is conducted to form a via hole 41 extending through the second dielectric layer 36, the etch stop layer 34, and the first dielectric layer 32. Next, a second photoresist mask (not shown) is formed on the second dielectric layer 36 and a second anisotropic etching is conducted to form a trench 42 in the second dielectric layer 36 stopping at the etch stop layer 34. Thus far, the via hole 41 and the trench 42 constitutes the dual damascene opening 40.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 25, as follows:

--Subsequently, still referring to FIGS. 2 and 3b, a special plasma treatment of the present invention is performed (step S24). The special plasma treatment can remove remaining impurities on the

dielectric layer 30 and the first metal layer 10. For example, hydrogen-containing plasma, nitrogen-containing plasma, oxygen-containing plasma, or a mixture thereof can be used for the special plasma treatment. The flow rate of the plasma for the plasma treatment can be 20 sccm to 300 sccm.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 4, as follows:

--The above-mentioned first anisotropic etching to form the via hole 41 and the second anisotropic etching to form the trench 42 can be performed using a fluorine-containing plasma or a chlorine-containing plasma. For example, CF_4 can be used. As described in the prior art, fluorine, or chlorine impurities will remain after via hole and trench etching, which attack the interface between the first metal layer 10 and the cap layer 20. As a result, peeling of the dielectric layer 30 will occur after the substrate is subject to repeated thermal cycles. To prevent the dielectric layer peeling, the present invention can perform a plasma treatment with hydrogen-containing plasma on the first metal layer 10. The hydrogen-containing plasma can be hydrogen (H_2) plasma or ammonia (NH_3) plasma.--